

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR.

THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR, which, if given entire, would occupy more than ten of our columns, is necessarily abridged to accommodate it to the space at our command.

The report commences by stating that the authorized strength of the army (as now posted) is 13,821, officers and men; but that the actual strength is only 10,417, of which number 8,378 are employed in the frontier departments, or are now on the route to them. The Secretary then proceeds to speak of the employment of the troops during the past year, as follows:

It gives me pleasure to say that the measures taken for the protection of the inhabitants on our frontiers have been the direct and zealous cooperation, been more than usually successful. The troops have everywhere been actively and constantly employed. Indian depredations have been comparatively unimportant, and, except in California and Oregon, have not attained more than local importance.

In the Indian country immediately west of the Mississippi but two or three instances of collisions have occurred. Arrangements are now in progress which, by the establishment of new posts in more favorable positions, will enable the Department to respond with a number of smaller and less important posts; to give increased security to that frontier; to employ a greater force for the protection of the emigration crossing the great plains of the West, and at the same time materially diminish the cost of the military establishment in that part of the country.

In Texas Indian hostilities have diminished in frequency and importance, and in a majority of the cases that have been brought to the notice of the Department the depredations have been committed by Indians from Mexico. The Rio Grande is the boundary between the country and Mexico, and the positions to be occupied on it for the protection of that frontier and the fulfillment of our treaty stipulations with the Republic of Mexico are of the highest importance. The force on that river has been considerably increased, and arrangements are now being made, under the direction of Major General Smith, for an experienced officer of engineers to select the most favorable positions for the fortifications of this frontier, and for the construction of field works for their defence. As a part of this system, orders have been given for the establishment of a strong post on the Rio Grande, opposite the Mexican town of El Paso. The Department is also endeavoring to diminish collisions between the frontier inhabitants of the two countries have occurred. It is also in contemplation to establish a large post at the point where the great trail of the Comanche Indians crosses the Rio Grande. Other posts are being established on the northern frontier of Texas are also in progress; and when they are completed the Department hopes with confidence to give a very great degree of security to both the Mexican and Indian frontiers of that State.

New Mexico has been comparatively exempt from Indian disturbances during the past year. The few cases that have occurred have generally been traced to marauders and outlaws, for whose actions none of the tribes of that country can justly be held responsible. Those to which they nominally belong have given assurances, which, it is believed, they are endeavoring to fulfill. The Department has their intention to apprehend and deliver up these marauders and restore the property plundered by them.

The Indians of California and Oregon are numerous and warlike; but, as they were divided into small independent bands, and as they were not in possession of great numbers of firearms, their hostilities in previous years were not important. Now, however, that the rapidly-extending settlements of those countries are driving the Indians from their accustomed haunts and compelling them to encroach upon the territory of the whites, their depredations are becoming more serious. Within the past three years their hostilities—the result, in many instances, of the intrusion and aggressions of the whites—have been almost uninterrupted, and it is officially known that, in Northern California and Southern Oregon alone, within this period, the lives of many of our citizens, and the property of many of our citizens, have been sacrificed in collisions between the two races. The force in that country is not now, and never has been, sufficient; and, impressed with the idea of its entire inadequacy, the Department has since the close of the last year, been endeavoring to send there an additional regiment of infantry, but it was found that the state of the service would not then, nor does it yet, admit of it. The first mail from the Pacific, subsequent to the issue of this order, has been received, and it is believed that the force in that country will be increased to a sufficient number to maintain peace, and to the circumstances that controlled its organization.

The Secretary then recommends an increase in the rank and file of the army, by increasing the minimum organization of the companies to sixty-four privates, and by adding one regiment of dragoons and two regiments of rifles. He also recommends an increase in the number of companies of the army. It may be instructive to the consideration of this subject to refer to the strength of our military establishment as it has existed at different periods, and to the circumstances that controlled its organization.

In 1808 the legal strength of the army was 9,991, which was increased early in the year 1812, "for the defence of the Indian frontier," to 10,363. The war with England followed soon after this increase, and at its conclusion the establishment was reduced to 10,000. In 1818, officers and men, and so continued until 1821, when it was reduced to 6,126. This organization was continued until 1822, when it was increased to 7,129. In 1829 it was increased to 7,958, and in 1835 to 12,129. These last increases were made during the war with Mexico, and, although previously recommended with the view of preventing them, were not authorized until their actual occurrence had demonstrated the wisdom of the recommendation. In 1842, at the close of the Florida war, the army was reduced to 8,913, which number, with slight changes, was continued until, in the early part of 1846, the regiment of mounted riflemen was added for the protection of the emigration on the Oregon route, making the aggregate 4,418. At the close of the war with Mexico its organization was fixed at 10,000, and it was increased by a sliding scale, which admitted a total strength, if all the companies of the army were posted, at "remote stations," of 14,731. As they are now posted, the authorized strength is 13,821, but, for reasons which have already been explained, the actual strength is only 10,417.

It will be seen by the above statements that, in a period of fifty-five years, the military peace establishment of the country has been augmented less than four thousand men. In the same period our country has increased in population more than fivefold, and in the number of its territory more than fivefold. In 1808 the Indian frontier requiring troops for its protection was less than one thousand miles in extent, and there were no long lines of communication requiring defence. Now that frontier has increased to more than three thousand miles, and our communications through the Indian country—traversed annually by thousands of our citizens, and requiring constant protection—more than four thousand miles. Our seaboard and foreign frontier have been greatly increased, and of the latter over two thousand miles. The business frontier, along which, besides the duty of guarding and protecting our own inhabitants, is the superadded obligation (by treaty) of protecting the inhabitants of Mexico from the Indians living within our limits. By the annexation of Texas, the length of the Indian frontier has been increased from 2,400 miles to more than 3,000 miles, a very large portion of which, and which, unfortunately, are for the first time brought into contact with our people. The result of this is a vast increase in the number of our Indian frontier requiring troops for its protection, and, in consequence of our Government, by grants of land and pre-emption rights, to induce the rapid settlement of our Western frontier. This involves the duty of protection. The intimate contact thus produced between the two races, the proximity of the Indian to the white, and the necessity of the Indian to the white, have caused constant collisions. Aggressions on the part of either lead to retaliation, which, unfortunately, falls far more frequently upon the innocent and unoffending than upon the guilty, and retaliation leads to war. To prevent these disturbances, troops must be sent to the frontier, and the cost of the frontier is increased. It is not possible to prevent these disturbances, would at least diminish their frequency, and produce immense saving of money, property, and life.

The disposition of the army, and the assignment of troops to the frontier departments, have been stated in another part of this report. The force allotted to each is manifestly inadequate. It cannot be increased in any way, and the policy of our Government is to keep it as small as possible, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish. The policy of our Government is to keep it as small as possible, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish. The policy of our Government is to keep it as small as possible, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish.

With an army three times as great as ours, it would be impracticable to guard all points of our extended frontier as entirely to prevent Indian depredations. It is, therefore, the intention of the Department to post the troops in large bodies at commanding positions among the Indians, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish. The policy of our Government is to keep it as small as possible, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish.

The multiplication of small posts, however much it may appear to have been called for by the necessities of the service, is of a doubtful policy. The policy of our Government is to keep it as small as possible, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish. The policy of our Government is to keep it as small as possible, and to restrain aggression by the exhibition of a power adequate to punish.

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The communication with New Mexico, though tedious and expensive, is not liable to foreign interruption, and would not be changed by the occurrence of war. This case is somewhat different with regard to Texas, and essentially so with regard to the country bordering on the Pacific, which, from its wealth, is the most inviting, and from its remoteness, is, of all our possessions, the most exposed to the attack of a foreign power. In view of the ever possible contingency of war, and the difficulty of providing for it after it has occurred, it becomes important to take, at as early a period as possible, all necessary precautions for the security of our distant territory.

As the appropriation for the armament of fortifications for the last three years has either been refused or greatly reduced, under the impression that it depended upon the prosecution of the "system of permanent fortifications," it is proper to remark that this provision is not dependent upon the extent to which that system is carried, but is indispensable to any system of coast defence that may be adopted.

The construction of permanent fortifications and the creation of arsenals and depots is necessarily the work of time; but the armament for the most important points, both in Texas and on the Pacific coast, should, at the earliest practicable period, be sent there, and when in position temporary works sufficient for defence against any sudden attack by a naval force could readily be thrown up by the labor of the troops.

There should also be sent to the Pacific coast and stored at suitable points the materials and the means of transport needed for its defence, and to the arsenals on the Columbia river and on the bay of San Francisco the machinery and other means needed for the construction, equipment, and repair of all the material of war, as well as the means of transport. These materials and means are not perishable in their character. With a water transportation of sixteen thousand miles, and land routes impracticable for the transport of heavy supplies, it will be too late to adopt these measures when the need for them is felt. It is liable to interruption; and no prudent nation should trust, in matters of such vital importance, to the chances of a future that no human agency can foresee. As many of the supplies proposed to be sent to Texas and to the Pacific are now in depot at the mouth of the Columbia, it is liable to interruption; and no prudent nation should trust, in matters of such vital importance, to the chances of a future that no human agency can foresee.

As a measure of prudence and economy the transportation of such as may be sent to the Pacific is suggested that, where the distance is great, they should be sent by sea, and where the distance is small, they should be sent by land. It is suggested that, where the distance is great, they should be sent by sea, and where the distance is small, they should be sent by land.

Then follow a variety of details relating to the recruiting service, in which the country is informed of the scarcity of recruits, the number and relative proportions of deserters, the indisposition of soldiers to re-enlist, &c.; all of which results are ascribed to two principal causes, viz: first, the disparity between the pay of the soldier and the value of labor in civil life; and, secondly, the fact that length of service carries with it no reward, either in increased pay, rank, or privilege. The remedial measures proposed are an increase of the pay of soldiers and provision for the promotion to the lowest grade of commissioned officers of such of the non-commissioned officers of the army as may be found qualified for, and, by their character and services, entitled to such advancement. And, in order to provide for such non-commissioned officers as are not qualified to become commissioned officers, it is recommended that authority be granted to appoint a limited number of fort-keepers or barrack-masters, to be employed at the permanent fortifications not occupied by troops, as substitutes for the civil agents employed by the quartermaster's and engineer departments, receiving a compensation intermediate between that of the highest grade of non-commissioned and lowest grade of commissioned officers.

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After a full consideration of what is now and probably hereafter required of the army, I urgently recommend that the minimum organization of all companies be fixed, as in the mounted riflemen, at sixty-four privates, and that there be added to the present military establishment one regiment of dragoons and two regiments of rifles.

The increase is materially less than that recommended by the commanding general, and is considered absolutely indispensable to the proper efficiency of the military service. It will give a minimum organization of 15,528 officers and men, but may be expanded, if the limit fixed by the law of June 17, 1859, be continued, to 17,411. The establishment of 128 privates per company to 27,818, giving for a state of war an effective increase of from 10,000 to 12,000 men without the creation of new regiments. The experience of the last forty years has demonstrated the wisdom of maintaining in peace a permanent military establishment, capable of the greatest expansion in war. The increased efficiency and economy of companies, thus expanded in war from a nucleus of experienced and disciplined men, more than compensate for the additional expense of maintaining skeleton regiments in peace.

I also recommend that another company of engineers and miners be added to the engineer corps for the purposes for which the present company was authorized. The usefulness and economy of this class of soldiers has been practically demonstrated by the services of the company of engineers and miners, which has been given for the establishment of a permanent company of engineers and miners, which has been given for the establishment of a permanent company of engineers and miners.

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part, and prompt measures were taken for the application of the appropriation made at the last session of Congress for the defence of the harbor of San Francisco. That the minute examinations requisite before the commencement of the works, and the inquiries to be made as to the places of supply and the means of procuring materials, have limited operations to the preliminary preparations for construction, such as erecting the requisite accommodation for workmen, levelling sites, and making the detailed surveys for the fortifications.

The Secretary then relates what has been done by the Department in execution of the law of last Congress making an appropriation of \$150,000 to ascertain the most practicable and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean—the results to be laid before Congress by the first Monday in February next. The time allowed and the money appropriated, it is feared, will prove insufficient for the complete solution of this important problem. A vast extent of country was to be accurately surveyed, and numerous lines, thousands of miles in extent, to be examined. It is hardly to be hoped, therefore, that such data can be collected as will satisfactorily answer the question proposed, though it is confidently believed that much information will be added to the stock previously possessed—perhaps enough to determine the practicability of the proposed enterprise. The Secretary presents a general sketch of the country to be explored, in order to convey some idea of the magnitude of the examination required. He then alludes at some length to the results of surveys previously made, as well as to the operations of the general surveying parties now in the field. It has been ascertained that Walker's Pass, which was considered a fixed point in the route, is impracticable for a railway. Beyond this information which has been received is too limited and imperfect to justify an opinion on the question proposed by the act of Congress. The Secretary does not deem it proper, in this communication, to offer his views as to the means by which the General Government may constitutionally aid in the attainment of the contemplated object.

The importance of this road is argued on the grounds that navigable streams in the Western country, and great expense is incurred in the transportation of supplies, and in ensuring the services of troops stationed there as a protection against the Indians. The inconveniences arising from the use of wagons drawn by horses, mules, or oxen are given fully. The Secretary states briefly the beneficial results which would arise from an introduction of the dromedary into the military service, which he argues from the success arising from their employment in the Eastern countries. He also touches upon the importance of an appropriation being made for the fort at the junction of the rivers Gila and California.

The works of harbor and river improvement have made satisfactory progress during the past season, for the particulars of which the Secretary refers to the reports of the chiefs of the two corps of engineers having direction of these works. We copy what is further said on this subject by the Secretary:

The appropriations for these works have been made in August, 1852, the arrangements for executing a large majority of them had been made before I entered upon the duties of this Department. In determining upon the proper appropriation, and in determining upon the proper expenditure of the appropriations in commencing works on a scale which the Department has not means to complete, and which must in a good measure be lost unless Congress make further appropriations for them. These works, however, are of such a nature that they can be completed by the means of the appropriations made by Congress; but as it was not deemed competent for this Department to receive money from such sources, either by way of loan or gift, a regulation was adopted under which the Department could receive money from such sources, either by way of loan or gift, a regulation was adopted under which the Department could receive money from such sources, either by way of loan or gift.

To this mind, the Department has been endeavoring to complete the works authorized by the act of August, 1852, and, by the mode, extent, and cost of the several improvements seem to have been considered as matters of discretion, and the plans adopted for their execution determined by the Department, and, in some cases, by the amount of the appropriations, but would require for their completion large additional grants, amounting in some cases to almost ten-fold the original appropriations. In some cases corporations and associations of citizens have come forward with offers of voluntary contributions in aid of the appropriations made by Congress; but as it was not deemed competent for this Department to receive money from such sources, either by way of loan or gift, a regulation was adopted under which the Department could receive money from such sources, either by way of loan or gift.

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